



Healthy Alaska

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Inside This Issue:

Page 1

- The Choking Game
- Inhalant Abuse

Page 2

- Inhalant Abuse Continued
- Activity of the Month: Valentine's Tag
- Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics "Afterschool Style"
- Keep Gym in Schools Grant
- Valentine's Fruit Dip

Brain Booster:



Give me anger and it won't go away.
Give me a law and I will disobey it.
Give me an exit and through it I will step into the open air.
Give me a race and I will win it.

What three letter word am I?

The Choking Game

The choking game is a dangerous and potentially deadly activity involving intentional strangulation or asphyxiation in order to obtain a momentary high. Often performed by either the use of hands or material formed into a noose, the choking game deprives the body of oxygen for a period of time and, upon release, creates a warm rush and feeling of lightheadedness. As with drugs, the choking game can become highly addictive and can lead to increased play and risky behaviors (e.g. playing alone). While many youth view this activity as a safe alternative to drugs and alcohol, the loss of oxygen flowing to the brain not only leads to the loss of brain cells, but can also cause permanent brain damage, stroke, seizures, and death.

Because victims of the choking game are frequently mislabeled as suicides, the actual number of deaths each year is unknown. Nonetheless, the available data shows that boys are more likely to die than girls, most deaths occur when the game is played alone, and the occurrence of death is widespread throughout the United States (CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, February 15, 2008). Although the average age range for this behavior is 11 to 16 years, children as young as 6 have been found engaging in this deadly game.

With the subtle nature of the choking game, it is important for parents and educators to discuss the hazards of involvement with this practice with their children and students. It is also vital to learn the aliases used and to learn the warning signs of game play in order to intervene before it is too late.

The following lists provide examples of the warning signs and aliases used. For a more complete list of warning signs and aliases used, please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/ChokingGame/>

Warning Signs: Discussion of the game or its aliases, bloodshot eyes, marks on the neck, ropes, scarves, and belts tied to furniture or found knotted on the floor, etc.

Aliases: Pass-out game, scarf game, fainting game, blackout, purple hazing, space cowboy, etc.

Games Adolescents Shouldn't Play (G.A.S.P.) has created a website to educate parents and communities on the choking game. In addition to providing detailed information about the game, it also offers materials to aid in educating youth. This resource is available at <http://www.stop-the-choking-game.com/en/home.html>.

Inhalant Abuse

Inhalant abuse refers to the deliberate inhaling or sniffing of volatile chemicals in order to induce a state of intoxication. Unlike most illegal substances, inhalants consist of common chemicals found around the house, such as hairspray, spray paint, or correction fluids. While most recognize the risk of poisoning by household chemicals, many are unaware of the highly-addictive, drug-like qualities of these substances when intentionally misused nor are many aware of the deadly consequences of inhalant use.

Inhaled chemicals move quickly through the lungs, into the bloodstream, and to the brain, creating a feeling of intoxication within minutes. Because the effects of inhalants often wear off quickly, some users will inhale repeatedly in an attempt to prolong the sense of intoxication. During intoxication, users may experience hallucinations or may lose consciousness. In some cases, users can die instantly after breathing in a chemical. This is commonly referred to Sudden Sniffing Death Syndrome and occurs when the inhalant causes the rapid and erratic beating of the heart, resulting in cardiac arrest. Sudden sniffing death can help to anyone using inhalants, including first-time users.

The short term affects include headaches, lack of coordination, dizziness, confusion, and slurred speech along with other symptoms similar to alcohol consumption. Long-term users may exhibit disorientation, weight loss, and depression among other issues.

According to the 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) results, 9.8 percent of high school students admitted to sniffing, inhaling, or breathing chemicals one or more times during the life. The Monitoring the Future (MTF) survey, a national survey conducted by the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA), found that 14.9 percent of 8th-graders had used inhalants at least once during their lifetime and 3.8 had used them at least once in the past month. Inhalant use is most prevalent at the ages of 10 or 11, but children as young as 6 have been known to try it.



Brain Booster—

Answer:

OUT

OUT + Rage

OUT + Law

Out + Door

Out + Run

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School Health Partners:



www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/schoolhealth/



www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/school/default.htm

Inhalant Abuse continued...

The best method of preventing inhalant abuse is to discuss with children the hazards of sniffing/breathing chemicals and how household products should be properly use.

The Alliance for Consumer Education (ACE) has provided tips to help parents lead a discussion regarding this form of drug abuse. Broken down into age groups (6-11, 12-18), these tips involve topics of discussion as well as advice on ways parents can help their children avoid this addiction.

To read the ACE's tips, please visit: <http://www.inhalant.org/parents/tips.php>

In addition to prevention, parents and educators should learn the warning signs of inhalant abuse in order to intervene should a child become addicted. Some warning signs include an unusual chemical scent on the breath and/or clothing, dazed appearance, slurred speech, red or runny eyes and nose, signs of paint around the mouth and on the hands, and loss of appetite. If abuse is suspected, professional advice should be sought immediately.

The NIDA has produced an eight page report on inhalant abuse to provide detailed information on why and how chemicals are abused and how abuse affects users. The report can be viewed online at <http://www.drugabuse.gov/ResearchReports/Inhalants/Inhalants.html>.

Activity of the Month: Valentine's Tag



To play this game, you'll need 2-4 small foam balls (preferably red), Valentine's Day cards, and a basket to place the cards in.

Establish clear boundaries for the game and set up a basket outside the boundaries that contain various Valentine's Day cards (teachers can use cards that students exchange).

Select 2-4 students to hold the red foam balls - they are the taggers. Ask students to walk first and then incorporate different loco-motor skills. If a student gets tagged by a person with a red foam ball, he/she must assume the shape of a valentine with hands held in a heart shape over their head, feet together. To get back in the game a student who is free runs to the basket, gets a Valentines Day card and reads it to the frozen person. Once it is read the person who read it puts it back in the basket. The frozen person is now free to get back in the game.

For younger children, instead of Valentine's cards, have them compliment each other to unfreeze students.

For more great PE lesson plan ideas, visit <http://www.pecentral.org/index.html>

Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics "Afterschool Style"

Visit the Before and Afterschool website this month to catch the spirit of the Winter Olympic Games. There you will find easy-to-use Olympic physical activity stations, lessons, games, academic enrichment activities and information to share with your students on ways to eat and be fit like an Olympian. Students can even track their favorite US Olympian online.

<http://www.healthiergeneration.org/schools.aspx?id=3929>

Keep Gym in Schools Grant

The NFL network is providing Keep Gym in School grants to improve physical education (PE) and to raise awareness for the important role that PE plays in the lives of the nation's children. Funds may be used to create and improve fitness programs, purchase equipment, fund salaries, and/or make facility improvements.

Middle schools in the 50 United States and the District of Columbia that serve grades 6-8 (separate middle schools, combination K-8, combination 7-12, or any combination therein with a distinct middle school curriculum) are eligible applicants. Ten grants of \$1,000 each will be awarded to in-need middle schools from across the country.

Nominations must be made online by no later than March 1, 2010. Full applications, requested from 20 of the nominated middle schools, must be postmarked by April 12. Proposals must demonstrate need as the key criteria in the application.

For more information, visit: <http://keepgyminscool.com>

Valentine's Fruit Dip

For a refreshing Valentine's Day snack, try this delicious, satisfying treat:

Mix one container of strawberry yogurt with two cups of strawberry flavored or plain Cool Whip®. Cut up pieces of fruit and arrange on skewers. Dip fruit in the yogurt mixture and enjoy!

